



FEATURING LAURIE BEECHMAN AND AUSTIN PENDLETON  
**BACKERS' AUDITION**



**S**ONGWRITER **S**HOWCASE **S**ERIES



1. Introduction
2. Introduction to **We're Still Friends**
3. **We're Still Friends**
4. Introduction to **Monica**
5. **Monica**
6. Introduction to **A Mover's Life**
7. **A Mover's Life**
8. Introduction to **By Threes**
9. **By Threes**
10. Introduction to **Love Revolution**
11. **Love Revolution**
12. Introduction to **Someone Wonderful I Missed**
13. **Someone Wonderful I Missed**
14. Introduction to **Sexually Free**
15. **Sexually Free**
16. **Hey There, Good Times**
17. Introduction to **Lovers on Christmas Eve**
18. **Lovers on Christmas Eve**
19. Introduction to **The Blessing**
20. **The Blessing**
21. Introduction to **Everybody Today Is Turning On**
22. **Everybody Today Is Turning On**
23. Introduction to **Married Couple**
24. **Married Couple**
25. Introduction to Reprises
26. **By Threes / Someone Wonderful I Missed / A Mover's Life / Sexually Free / Married Couple**
27. Introduction to **I Love My Wife**
28. **I Love My Wife**

#### BONUS TRACKS

From **Atlantic City**

Lyrics by Christopher Gore

29. **When Jill Is Gone**

30. **I Really Love You**

From **Home Again**

Lyrics by Barbara Fried

31. **All for Love**

32. **Wedding Song**

33. **When It Comes to Loving**

Presented by the authors, Cy Coleman and Michael Stewart

Performers: Laurie Beechman and Austin Pendleton

Music by Cy Coleman • Lyrics by Michael Stewart

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PROJECT





Ilene Graff, Lenny Baker



The Band

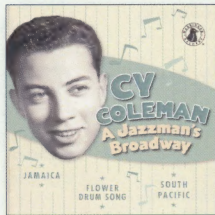


James Naughton, Graff



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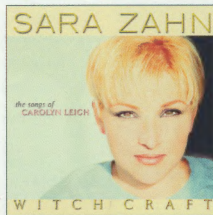


YOU FASCINATE ME SO



BARNUM  
Backers' Audition

### SARAH ZAHN



WITCH CRAFT:  
The Songs of Carolyn Leigh



BACKERS' AUDITION

# I LOVE MY WIFE

Presented by the authors, **Cy Coleman** and **Michael Stewart**

Performers: **Laurie Beechman** and **Austin Pendleton**

Music by **Cy Coleman**

Lyrics by **Michael Stewart**

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# FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

NOTES BY ANDY PROPST

During the late 1970s, the always-prolific Cy Coleman juggled a quartet of new musicals with exceptional dexterity. He also was examining, in three of them, the very fabric of the United States—from love and marriage to politics and the American Dream—in tuneful and surprising ways.

The first of these musicals was *I Love My Wife*, which featured a book and lyrics by Michael Stewart, who had penned the scripts for such enormously successful musicals as *Hello, Dolly!* and *Bye Bye Birdie*. Coleman and Stewart had first worked together on the musical *Seesaw* in 1972, and a few years later Stewart brought the idea of *Wife* to Coleman. His inspiration was an intimate French comedy about two married couples' efforts to establish a communal marital relationship: Luis Rego's *Viens chez moi, j'habite chez une copine*, which translates roughly to *Come Up to My Place, I'm Living With a Girlfriend*.

Stewart wanted to Americanize the comedy while retaining what had fascinated him when he saw Rego's play in France: He proposed a show with a company of four principal actors

and a small group of musicians who would play both the songs and all of the supporting parts. When Stewart described the piece and his idea, the composer expressed immediate interest. What appealed to him was the fact that it seemed as if it was a musical in revue format that wasn't a revue. The project would afford him the chance to pen a score that spanned the gamut of music that could be heard by spinning a radio dial from one end to the other.

Coleman himself, when talking with Robert Viagas for the book *The Alchemy of Theatre—The Divine Science: Essays on Theatre and the Art of Collaboration*, said that the show's music was “a hybrid,” adding, “but a hybrid is what I am. Beethoven, jazz, Broadway, TV—it all mixes up into who I am.” Indeed, the score to *I Love My Wife* has something for just about all musical tastes, from country and western (“Someone Wonderful I Missed”) to light contemporary pop (“Love Revolution”) to old-time barbershop quartets (“A Mover's Life”) to honky-tonk jazz (“Hey There, Good Times”).

These songs and 11 others comprise the score for a musical that centers on two New Jersey couples' attempts to join the sexually liberated with a little wife swapping. Once the book and score were completed, Coleman, as would often be his habit, gathered his collaborator and two singers to create a recording that could serve to introduce the show to potential investors and/or other members of the creative team, such as prospective directors.

It is that recording for *I Love My Wife* that makes up the bulk of this disc; its 28 tracks include Coleman's score as well as Stewart's narrative that takes the listener through the story of the show step by step. His delivery has an immediate (even from the distance of over 40 years) excitement to it, and it's not hard to imagine the enthusiasm it might have generated among the people to whom it was sent. One of the other joys of the recording is the inclusion of one song that never made it into the musical, “The Blessing,” and for those who know the show, there are also some fascinating, sometimes subtle, differences between the story as Stewart tells it and the final version that reached Broadway.

As for the performers, Coleman and Stewart are joined by a pair of superlative artists. The female voice on the recording belongs to Laurie Beechman, who had yet to make her Broadway debut. That came just four days after the opening of *Wife*, when she

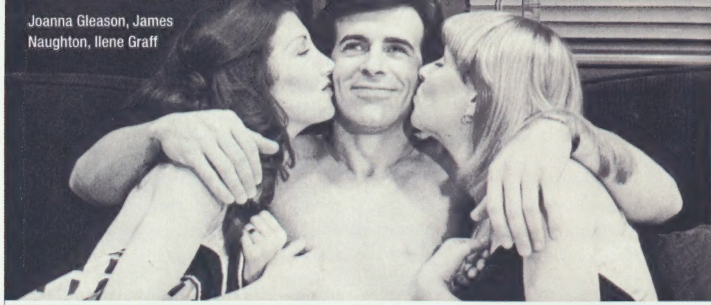
played, among other roles, Star to Be in *Annie*, belting out the solo in “NYC,” and she would later assume the role of Grizabella in the Broadway production of *Cats*. Playing opposite her is the versatile Austin Pendleton who, in addition to creating the role of Motel the tailor in *Fiddler on the Roof*, had starred in the Cryer and Ford hit *The Last Sweet Days of Isaac*.

The backers' audition/demo tapes and performances achieved their goal, and *I Love My Wife* opened on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on April 17, 1977. Many of the reviews the next morning were glowing. For instance, Clive Barnes wrote in his *New York Times* review: “What Mr. Coleman and Mr. Stewart have done is breathtakingly simple, but no one—so far as this aging memory can recall—has ever done it before. . . . The musicians are welded into the play, as a kind of Greek chorus.” The musical received six Tony Award nominations, including one for the score, and *Wife* ultimately amassed a run of 857 performances, making it Coleman's longest-running show up to that time.

Even as Coleman was writing and rehearsing *I Love My Wife*, he was also at work on a musical titled *Atlantic City* with lyricist Christopher Gore, John Guare and Jack Heifner both drafted books for the piece that explored the New Jersey city's fabled and



Joanna Gleason, James Naughton, Ilene Graff



Baker, Gleason, Graff, Naughton

Baker, Naughton, John Miller



Ilene Graff



Gleason, Baker



The Band, Baker, Graff, Gleason, Naughton





glamorous past and grim (at least at the time) present. The material attracted the attention of director-choreographer Bob Fosse, whose friendship and professional relationship with the composer stretched back to the 1960s with the shows *Little Me* and *Sweet Charity*. Ultimately *Atlantic City* went unproduced, but Coleman recorded a demo disc of its songs, two of which are included in this collection.

In both its substance and music, *Atlantic City* echoes *I Love My Wife*. Both set in New Jersey, the two shows look at then-contemporary issues, and Coleman, always a chameleon as a composer, serves up a tantalizing array of sounds in his score. For this album we've picked two songs that complement his work on *I Love My Wife*: "I Really Love You" and "When Jack Loves Jill." The former shows how adeptly Coleman could work in the soft pop sound of the era, while the latter, much like "Everybody Today Is Turning On," demonstrates how he could make his music seem to chuckle even as his lyricist was cracking the joke.

The musical *Home Again* is the third of what I think of as a triptych of Coleman musicals from the era—all of them about what America had become in the years following the end of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. Coleman began this project in the early 1970s, just after he and lyricist Barbra Fried had first met

and collaborated on a pair of songs that he recorded as pop singles. When he suggested to her that Russell Baker's columns for *The New York Times*, which pointedly (and humorously) commented on the topics of the day, might serve as a basis for a musical, she agreed wholeheartedly. After enlisting an enthusiastic Baker, the trio began work on the show that ultimately would become known as *Home Again*.

What emerged was a musical that focused on a man's life from birth to middle age and in the process examined how the American dream changed from the 1920s through the 1970s. Unlike *Atlantic City*, *Home Again* did reach the stage. In 1979 the musical played tryout engagements in New Haven and Toronto, after which it shuttered.

More somber below the surface than *I Love My Wife*, *Home Again* nevertheless had a buoyancy thanks to Baker's sly writing, Coleman's infectious tunes and Fried's often witty lyrics. *Home Again* also examined the institution of marriage and the nature of love. You'll hear Coleman and Fried's work on the final three tracks of this CD—demo tracks that Coleman recorded as he and producers looked for both a director and funding for the production.

And once again, you'll hear echoes of *Wife* in these cuts. The sweetness of "All for Love" is terrifically reminiscent of the title song to

*Wife*, and in "When It Comes to Loving," you'll hear Coleman again working in a pop vernacular. In fact, "Loving" was one of the first songs he and Fried wrote, and it was released as a single before being interpolated into *Home Again*.

This song proves to be a perfect way to turn back the clock some 40 years to a time when Coleman and his varied collaborators were attempting to capture the world around them while also exploring both the joyous and sometimes fickle nature of romance.

*Andy Propst* is the author of the biographies *They Made Us Happy: Betty Comden and Adolph Green's Musicals and Movies* (Oxford University Press), *You Fascinate Me So: The Life and Times of Cy Coleman* (Applause Theatre & Cinema Books/Hal Leonard), and most recently, *The 100 Most Important People in Musical Theatre* (Rowman and Littlefield).

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#### ABOUT THE MUSICAL THEATER PROJECT AND HARBINGER RECORDS

The **Musical Theater Project** was formed in 2000 to foster a deep appreciation of the classic American musical—and the social and cultural history surrounding it—by creating programs that educate as well as entertain people of all ages. This nonprofit organization manages the **Harbinger Records** catalogue, which since 1983 has spotlighted musical theater, cabaret

and the Great American Songbook. TMTF also produces a concert and cabaret series, a school program and a weekly radio program heard on SiriusXM on Broadway and public stations around the country. For information on programming—and how you can support Harbinger's mission—visit [MusicalTheaterProject.org](http://MusicalTheaterProject.org) or call 216-860-1518. *Bill Rudman, Founder and Artistic Director; Heather Meeker, Executive Director.*

*Produced by* KEN BLOOM

*Associate Producer* BILL RUDMAN

*Mastering Engineer* ALAN SILVERMAN, ARFI MASTERING

*Design* LUANN BLONKOWSKI / 64 SECOND DESIGN

*Photos courtesy of* PHOTOFEST

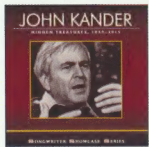
*Project Manager* HANNAH SHARNSKY

*Production Manager* BARBARA MILLOY, ECHO IMAGING

*Special Thanks:* ANDY PROPST, DAMON BOOTH, DOWNTOWN MUSIC



ONCE YOU'VE ENJOYED THIS ALBUM, YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION ...



*John Kander: Hidden Treasures*—The still-active (at 90) composer of *Cabaret*, *Chicago* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* worked closely with Harbinger's **Bill Rudman** and **Ken Bloom** on the creation of this set, which includes a trove "of rarely heard Kander & Ebb demos, songs from both produced and un-produced musicals, and even a sampling of his student work at Oberlin College in 1951. The set covers more than 60 years through songs written in 2015, and the 64-page booklet draws on a series of interviews Kander did with *New York Times* theater critic **Jesse Green**.



*Sheldon Harnick: Hidden Treasures*—In this historic release, the great lyricist of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *She Loves Me* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fiorello!* shares with musical theater fans 53 of his "Hidden Treasures": rarely (and in some cases, never-before-) heard songs from 17 musicals, with many songs performed by Harnick himself and his late composer-partner **Jerry Bock**. Harbinger Records producers **Ken Bloom** and **Bill Rudman** worked closely with Harnick for two years on this project. The deluxe package includes a 60-page booklet with extensive notes by Harnick and a Foreword by Broadway producer **Harold Prince**.



*Hugh Martin: Hidden Treasures*—Produced by musical theater authorities **Ken Bloom** and **Bill Rudman**, this fascinating set celebrating a true innovator for Broadway and Hollywood is supplemented by an 88-page booklet with articles on Martin's protean gifts. His admirer **Stephen Sondheim** provides the Foreword; **Mark Eden Horowitz**, a senior music specialist at the Library of Congress, writes about Martin as composer and vocal arranger; **Sheldon Harnick** (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *She Loves Me*) discusses the work of his fellow lyricist; and **Michael Feinstein** comments on Martin as a fellow vocalist (the two collaborated on a Martin songbook CD in 1992).



*Jones and Schmidt: Hidden Treasures*—This two-CD retrospective is a must-have for all lovers of musical theater! **Tom Jones** and **Harvey Schmidt** first won fame as the creators of *The Fantasticks*—the world's longest-running musical, with more than 21,000 performances given in New York over a period of 58 years. But the Jones & Schmidt musicals also include Broadway classics such as *I Do! I Do!*, *110 in the Shade* and *Celebration*. Selections from these and 12 other shows are included in Harbinger's deluxe set, which features many previously unreleased demos performed by the songwriters themselves. Jones & Schmidt worked closely with producer **Bill Rudman** to ensure that this album would best represent their legacy, and the songwriters contributed liner notes for a 64-page booklet that includes dozens of never-before-seen photos. Singers also include **Mary Martin**, **Robert Preston**, **Bert Lahr**, **Stanley Holloway** and **Susan Watson**.



*All American: Live Backers' Audition*—Once upon a time in 1962, there was a Broadway musical called *All American* penned by three fast-rising young authors: the songwriting team of **Charles Strouse** and **Lee Adams** (fresh from *Bye Bye Birdie*) and the pre-Hollywood **Mel Brooks**. This CD offers a piece of Broadway history—a rare glimpse into the creation of a new musical comedy through the lens of a backers' audition. It's an example of a time-honored tradition that probably goes back to the very beginnings of commercial theater. And performing the score and sharing the story with us are the songwriters themselves.



*Barnum Backers' Audition*—For the first time ever, a glimpse behind the scenes at the birth of a new musical comedy! Before the show could begin, production money for the budget had to be raised. And here is a unique opportunity to hear an actual backers' audition in a fashionable East Side New York apartment with the actual songwriters—**Cy Coleman** and **Michael Stewart**—performing the score! And as an added bonus, several songs that were subsequently cut from the musical appear here for the first time in any medium. The fascinating liner notes were written by Coleman biographer **Andy Propst**. Listening to this rare, historic recording, imagine yourself sitting in a lavish apartment plied with drinks and hors d'oeuvres and entertained by this marvelous score. Would you have invested in the show? Taken a chance for a great success or an utter flop? *Barnum* eventually ran at the St. James Theatre for over 800 performances.



*Richard Rodgers: Command Performance*—In the 1920s the young turk **Richard Rodgers**, who was already reinventing American musical comedy, recorded sparkling piano rolls showcasing Rodgers & Hart songs. All 14 are featured in this prestigious album, hailed by *Gramophone* as "a release musical theater mavens will treasure." In addition to the rolls, the CD features Rodgers's demos from the 1934 film musical *Mississippi* (the composer's only recorded vocals); a priceless 1937 radio appearance in which Rodgers is joined by **Lorenz Hart**, **Don Ameche** and **Charlie McCarthy**; and other rare recordings of the composer at the piano or conducting his music. Annotators include **William Bolcom**, **Michael Feinstein**, **Hugh Martin** and **Ted Chapin**, president of Rodgers & Hammerstein.



*Cy Coleman: You Fascinate Me So*—28 rare tracks featuring the Broadway composer and jazz piano genius performing songs from shows produced and unproduced along with his lyricist-partners **Carolyn Leigh** and others. A treasure trove of Coleman's career with extensive liner notes by Coleman biographer **Andy Propst**.



I LOVE  
MY WIFE  
BACKERS' AUDITION

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**S**ONGWRITER  
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